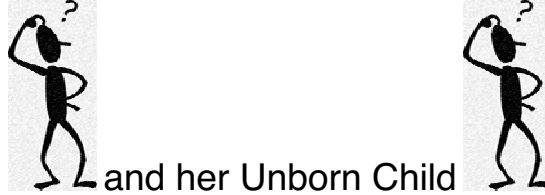


## The Tragedy and Mystery of Laci Petersen



and her Unborn Child

The death of Laci Petersen and her child is a heartbreaking tragedy. The media coverage of the ongoing mystery has made it a national story. The media has been attracted to this case for the same reasons a reader might be attracted to a mystery novel. The people involved are young and successful. There are themes of love and betrayal. And the gruesome details of the case unfold as it goes to trial. News watchers have a morbid desire to know if Laci's husband, Scott Petersen, is lying, and if he really killed his beautiful 27 year old wife and their unborn child.

Almost one year ago, on December 28, 2002, the San Francisco Chronicle reported that Scott Petersen said he had returned from a fishing trip to find his wife gone (DeFao A17). The family thought she was kidnapped and the FBI began searching everywhere, with dogs and divers and helicopters and on horseback and foot. The case became a mystery and no one could offer any reasons for why Laci might leave her husband, home, and job just two months before her baby was due.

In April an unborn baby floated ashore near where Scott Petersen said he went fishing and two days later the baby's mother's body washed ashore as well, without a head. Scott Petersen was arrested for the murder while driving in San Diego, just miles from the Mexican border. He pleaded innocent to two counts of murder, and could get the death penalty ("Petersen" A1).

Witnesses have taken lie detector tests and accused Scott Peterson of planning a kidnapping weeks before she had disappeared and contacting members of neo-nazi motorcycle gang about stealing his wife's car ("Peterson" A1). A Modesto police detective testified that he had told his mistress that he had "lost" his wife and would be spending the holidays, as a widower, with his mistress (Lee A21)

The trial is not yet over, but there is DNA evidence that a hair caught in a pair of pliers might be Laci's. And Scott Peterson also bought a car using his mother's name before he was caught by police near San Diego.

The trial is not over yet. How Laci Peterson died has not been revealed. Did Scott Petersen do it? Will the truth be known? It seems the media is convinced that he is a murderer. To the media this is an easy and profitable story to cover because it is so similar to a thrilling mystery novel.

### Newspapers Cited

Defao, Janine. "Search Finds no Trace of Modesto woman: Police seem to focus on husband but say he is not a suspect." San Francisco Chronicle, 28, Dec. 2202: A17.

Lee, Henry K. "Stark testimony at Petersen hearing by cop." San Francisco Chronicle., 7, Nov. 2003.

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